

"It's Déjà vu all over again"
Yogi Bera

Even with the recent rains, we have had a very dry winter, and are heading into our "high" fire season much earlier than we normally experience. Our foothills are covered with chaparral that has evolved to survive and even thrive in an environment that supports large scale wildfires. Wildfires are part of the cycle of nature in our area, occurring on the average of every 10 to 20 years with great frequency. Scientists have documented this fire history in an interesting document:


http://www.californiachaparral.com/images/Santa_Ana_Fires_500_years.pdf

Already, during this dry winter we have had several fires that have consumed over 10 acres of vegetation; so right now is the time to get prepared.

In the next few months, you may see firefighters in our extreme fire hazard area neighborhoods with G.P.S. devices. They are recording critical information that could be used to help develop evacuation routes, and identify safety zones and critical infrastructure such as water sources and utilities. Your firefighters are preparing for the next event which will happen sooner or later in our lives. Please take a moment to say hello and ask the firefighters any questions that you may have. They are committed to your safety and are working hard at getting this information which will be entered into our databases and made securely accessible for first and mutual aid responders via the internet.

Firefighters know the importance of the concept of "situational awareness". Santa Barbara citizens should be well aware of their combustible surroundings. You can increase your situational awareness by keeping informed of weather conditions which contribute to rapid fire propagation, especially strong down canyon winds known as "Sundowners". These winds are fairly predictable, and when forecasted, should cause you to take additional precautions.

Firefighters follow "Standard Firefighting Orders". These have been synthesized into a version for homeowners in our [READY! SET! GO!](#) Program. Please take a moment to look at the information that is provided in this brochure. By having a disaster plan for your family and by developing defensible space around your property you will be better prepared for the next time fire strikes. For, as Sir Winston Churchill once said, "Those who don't learn from history are doomed to repeat it".



Andrew DiMizio, Fire Chief